

STATEMENT OF ATTORNEY GENERAL LINDA KELLY
BEFORE HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
REGARDING PROPOSED BUDGET FOR
THE OFFICE OF ATTORNEY GENERAL

Thank you Chairman Adolph, Chairman Markosek, and
Members of the House Appropriations Committee.

I am Attorney General Linda Kelly, and I'm here today to
address any questions you might have regarding the budget
request for the Office of Attorney General.

Accompanying me today are Bruce Beemer, Chief of Staff,
and Jim Ingalzo, Director of our Management Services Division. I
would like to state at the outset that the budget I have proposed
attempts to balance the difficult fiscal realities facing the
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the need for our Office to
continue with its core functions. The budget request I am making
on behalf of 740 of the hardest working men and women in the
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania will simply enable the Office to

continue the current level of law enforcement and consumer protection programs.

The only increase we have requested is the amount necessary to cover pay increases for employees, including union employees that are mandated by contract, along with required increases in pension and health expenses. The Office of Attorney General has worked tirelessly to reduce costs and still provide the citizens of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania with critical protections in the areas of law enforcement, consumer protection, and the protection of our most vulnerable citizens. Since 2008, we have eliminated 80 positions, and in the current budget request you have before you today we have not included funding for 32 other positions that are currently vacant. Therefore, we have had a total cut of approximately 112 jobs in the past three years. The depth of those personnel losses can have a deleterious effect on our critical missions.

It is also noteworthy that within the last year we have recovered or saved within \$600 million for Pennsylvania consumers and state agencies. That is almost eight times our annual budget, and that does not include the nonmonetary value of our drug investigations, child predator arrests, and other criminal cases that directly impact public safety. As an example, I would like the Committee to note that the Governor's Budget again reduces funding for our Tobacco Enforcement Unit. This Unit has seen cuts in four successive years leading to an inability to sustain the current staffing level without reaching into other areas of our budget. The Tobacco Enforcement Unit is directly responsible for approximately \$330 million being placed into the General Fund last year. Despite the enormous financial benefit of having an effective Tobacco Enforcement Unit, there have been continual cuts which can ultimately have a damaging effect on our Office's ability to maintain the personnel and standards necessary to continue with such successful enforcement efforts.

I will be happy to address any questions you may have.